

*Missouri  
Department  
of Transportation*



**Roger Schwartz, District Engineer**

**Central District**  
1511 Missouri Boulevard  
P.O. Box 718  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
(573) 751-3322  
fax (573) 522-1059  
Toll free 1-888 ASK MoDOT  
[www.modot.org](http://www.modot.org)

**Meeting:** U.S. 54 Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

**Meeting Date:** June 9, 2010 **Time:** 1-4 p.m.

**Location:** Cole County Fire Station 4  
5206 Monticello Road

Meeting Participants	Representing (Agency or Firm)
Eric Landwehr	Cole County Public Works
Sheriff Greg White	Cole County Sheriff Department
Lt. David Earney	Missouri State Highway Patrol
Donita Stubinger	Donita's Catering
Jim Wunderlich	Resident
Donald Braun	Cole County Fire Protection District
Gary Smith	
Gary Morrow	Cole R-V Schools
Byron Shaw	
Ralph Popp	Resident
Roger Schwartz, District Engineer Leanna DePue, Director of Highway Safety Mike Curtit, Assistant State Traffic Engineer Matt Myers, District Traffic Engineer Trent Brooks, Project Manager John Miller, Traffic Safety Engineer Tamara Pitts, Int. Traffic Studies Specialist Alan Trampe, Area Engineer Kristin Gerber, Community Relations Manager	Missouri Department of Transportation

Project Manager Trent Brooks opened the meeting and reviewed the purpose of U.S. 54, which is to move people across the state. It also provides people with access to their businesses and residences. Trent did indicate we would be lowering the speed limit on much of the corridor to 65 mph.

Leanna Depue next introduced herself and discussed her role within MoDOT as the Director of Highway Safety. Leanna reiterated how we arrived at where we are today and defined the Section 154 Open Container funding source for this project and discussed how the money was allowed to be used. The funding can be used anywhere in the state to solve severe crash problems.

Leanna indicated that MoDOT has researched and visited other states to learn about other techniques and safety enhancements being used (states such as Washington, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, Oregon, and Illinois). The goal is to find proven methods that can be used in Missouri to save lives.

In Missouri, hundreds of miles of installations of median guard cable were completed using the Open Container funding source. This was done to minimize the cross-median fatalities on our divided roadways. By implementing this safety feature, Missouri has succeeded at nearly eliminating this crash type. Leanna indicated we are now saving over 45 lives each year due to the use of median guard cable.

MoDOT is now looking at other areas of concern. The “Blueprint to Arrive Alive” identifies intersections as a strategic issue. We know from recent information that MO 30, MO 13 and U.S. 54 are experiencing serious intersection crash concerns. U.S. 54 in Cole County is a route that historically has nearly three fatalities and 14 disabling injuries each year and many of the issues exist at the intersections.

In 2005, Nearly 1,257 lives were lost on Missouri roadways and nearly 9,000 disabling injuries occurred. MoDOT has aggressively installed hundreds of miles of median guard cable on state highways and thousands of miles of rumbles stripes in an effort to eliminate specific crash types. In 2009, we still lost too many lives, but we have reduced the fatalities to 878. Leanna indicated “hope is not a strategy” and we need to “do the right thing at the right location to save more lives.”

Leanna stated that we have reduced lane departure fatalities by 41 percent from 2005 to 2009. She also indicated we are down about 15 percent from last year (reduced fatalities from prior year).

Trent Brooks next stated we only have \$5 Million to complete important safety enhancements. He indicated an average interchange would cost \$10 Million to construct. He said “we need to spend the funding to make the largest impact.” Trent next showed a presentation that indicated the crash experience we have had on this route including the severe crashes that have occurred. He also indicated we have had a large amount of angle crashes (severe crashes) and that is why we have been focusing on solutions that would minimize the occurrence of angle crashes. Trent next went over each intersection and gathered committee and public comments.

The following are the comments expressed for each design at each location by committee members and some members of the general public in attendance:

A. Route E/Pleasant Hill Road

- a. Incorporate acceleration and deceleration lanes
- b. Clarification was requested about who has the right of way with this design. (Traffic on U.S. 54 currently has and will continue to have the right of way. Entering traffic must yield to vehicles already on the highway.)
- c. There is approximately 1,200 feet available for drivers to make u-turn

- d. Traffic volumes should not create issues with u-turn maneuvers
  - e. Long Trucks? We will need to accommodate large trucks, but it is still better than current situation where the truck trailer is often still in the lanes with existing design
  - f. Agricultural equipment? We will need to take a look at the options available for the farming equipment
  - g. Would like even more room to get to left-turn movement
  - h. The traffic counts are much heavier during the weekends
    - While traffic may be heavy during the weekends, we still need to have accurate turning movement information for the intersections (that is why traffic is measured Tuesday – Thursday)
  - i. Need to slow the traffic speeds – even lower than the proposed 65 mph
  - j. Compliment paid to MoDOT – but feels these solutions will just move the problems down the road. Need to lower the speed limit to 55 mph – and need to get teeth into it (enforcement)
  - k. Use cameras for speed enforcement – Roger Schwartze indicated this is currently not legal in Missouri
  - l. Do we have enough enforcement?
  - m. What happens when two vehicles are turning at similar time (j-turn location with intersection just to north)?
  - n. No enforcement present on U.S. 54 from Route D to Camdenton
- B. Monticello/Goller Road
- a. There has been a change in the design
  - b. T intersections will improve the safety for each intersection
  - c. Concern that we will move the crashes to the south intersection
  - d. Fire department – may need to drive a bit further to get on U.S. 54 East direction, but it may actually be faster
  - e. Currently cars are stacking up in the median cross-over
  - f. Three lanes in this area?
  - g. Confusing for those not familiar with area
  - h. Add a right-out movement at north intersection
  - i. What is the traffic split?
  - j. How will businesses be affected? It is working at furniture store location?
  - k. Acceleration lane going west? Could be considered.
  - l. How will you remove snow? We can evaluate this, but we already do it at a couple of locations around the state.
  - m. Crossing traffic could be problem
  - n. Trucks must be able to turn
  - o. Why are the designs not the same for every intersection since consistency could be an advantage? While each intersection must work together, the characteristics of each intersection is unique and has different traffic.
- C. Buffalo Road/Heritage Highway
- a. This design is similar to the U.S. 65 designs near Buffalo – the terrain dictated this design
  - b. Must accommodate the slow moving trucks

- c. Will not be able to accelerate to get across 2 lanes of traffic to reach inside lane
  - d. Move rock bluff to improve sight distance
  - e. Add acceleration lane for West-bound
  - f. How will the trucks make the maneuver?
  - g. Use STOP approach rumbles
  - h. Can we use signals?
  - i. Four people died at this intersection when the speed limit was 55 mph
  - j. Donita indicated it is almost impossible to turn left so she has trucks go right to the next crossover and they make the left turn there (like a j-turn)
- D. Honey Creek
- a. Not addressing congestion
  - b. It appears we are trading fatalities and severe injuries for property damage and light injury crashes
  - c. Long range plans?
    - i. Widening is not on the radar
  - d. Every intersection needs an interchange – this is just a band-aid
    - i. The side streets do not currently have enough traffic to justify an interchange
  - e. No new money – just the \$5 Million
- E. Shepard Hills/RT CC
- a. Cut back the bluff
  - b. The committee indicated they liked the change in design
  - c. Add acceleration lane for westbound off Route CC
    - There is a lot of truck/vehicle interaction (rear end crash types)
  - d. Don't like trucks having to cross 2 lanes and be required to get in acceleration lane
    - Is this an illegal maneuver for CDL
  - e. Need advance signing
  - f. Need more room between j-turn and crest of hill (westbound traffic) – currently this is 900 feet in the design
  - g. Speed limits – why not lower? 65 mph is a speed that we believe most people will drive (if we drop it too low, then we may have a wider range of traffic and create a less safe situation)
  - h. There were 85,000 vehicles on U.S. 54 over the Memorial Day holiday
  - i. Need signals on this route
  - j. The speed limit should be 60 mph maximum
  - k. Can we use interstate funds to improve route? No.
- F. Route D
- a. No discussion
- G. Cassidy Road
- a. No discussion

There were also additional comments that pertain to many of the locations. Below are the comments from the committee and general public:

- A. We need more room from intersection to j-turn
- B. We need to consider very large vehicles like mobile homes
- C. Lowering the speed limit to 65 mph is good
- D. Concept of change is problem
  - a. What we have does not work
  - b. J-turns can work
- E. Public meeting will be difficult, but we must do what is right
- F. We need to think of how we will affect business owners
- G. J-turns are good but what about space with trucks? Also, school buses are an issue and uphill grades will cause issues.
- H. How far do we get before the j-turn?
- I. At Donita's intersection we need to go more west to improve the safety and sight distance
- J. People are not patient
- K. We are the ones causing the wrecks out here
- L. Maybe we should only do a couple of locations using the j-turn design
- M. Do not use the design like that on U.S. 50 (intersection using offset left turns)
  - These are confusing for who has the right of way
- N. Timeline? We will follow process as we proceed (next Spring)
- O. How will we communicate this to the public?
  - a. Video/simulation
  - b. Show the before and after conflict points
  - c. Maybe we need to build one

We are addressing 11 crossovers with the designs shown. With the designs, we have gone from 347 conflict points down to 179 and many of the "crossing" conflict points have been eliminated. There is no right of way anticipated on these projects.